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## **State introduces Point of Sale Sticker Printing Statewide**

A new vehicle registration sticker process is being expanded statewide after an initial rollout that began last summer. The new registration stickers, which will be issued at county tax offices, authorized subcontractors and auto dealerships, feature several improvements to deter sticker misuse and eliminate the need for state inventory control.

The new process, called Point of Sale Sticker Printing (POSSP), allows registration stickers to be printed at the time of sale. Information specific to the registered vehicle is printed directly on the sticker, which helps deter theft. TxDOT switched from license plate stickers to windshield stickers for most passenger vehicles about a decade ago to cut down on theft, and the new method will enhance these efforts. (Plate stickers are still used for motorcycles, trailers and some other types of vehicles.) The new system uses special forms that allow for printing both windshield and license plate stickers and automatically prints the appropriate sticker, voiding the one that is not needed.

With POSSP, each sticker uniquely identifies the registered vehicle by showing the last eight digits of the vehicle identification number, the license plate number, county of registration, and registration month and year. The new identification features greatly enhance law enforcement efforts to deter sticker abuse. County tax offices also welcome the efficiencies offered by the new system, which uses existing equipment supplied by the state.

POSSP was implemented in 191 counties across the state in August 2004, with this initial phase including counties that do not process transactions through subcontractor stations (e.g., grocery stores) or automobile dealerships. Counties that authorize subcontractor stations to issue the stickers began using the new system January 21. The final phase included full and limited pilot programs in Williamson, Angelina and Harris Counties to implement automobile dealership transactions. Full statewide implementation is now being completed in the remaining counties.

The new type of sticker is now being issued for all registration renewals, including in-person, mail-in and Internet transactions. POSSP prints the sticker on the customer's receipt, so stapling stickers and maintaining manual sticker books will no longer be necessary. This also eliminates the manufacturing and storage of 400,000 pre-printed sticker books annually for the previous system.

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In the past, yearly windshield stickers were printed in mass quantities based on projections of annual vehicle registrations. POSSP will eliminate the waste of excess stickers resulting from this process each year. As each sticker is printed “on demand” for a specific vehicle rather than pre-printed and later assigned to a vehicle, any internal accounting of the blank forms used for the POSSP is now optional rather than required. Registration transactions will be tracked through the state’s automated Registration and Title System in much the same way as the previous method.

“This new method is a vast improvement in Texas registration processes,” said Michael W. Behrens, TxDOT executive director. “Because the system connects each sticker with its registered vehicle, it is now much easier for law enforcement to identify misused stickers. The efficiency allows us to better serve our customers, and we’re always pleased when we can improve the quality of our services.”

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